Charles II.

A DECLARATION OF THE KING OF SCOTS

Concerning the Presbyterians: Agreed upon by the Bishop of Kildare, Doctor Leven, and divers others, at a general Councel held the 12th of this instant *December*, 1651. at *Paris* in *France*.

THis Declaration *being perus'ed and subscribed unto; it was Ordered to be forthwith published.*

Printed at *Paris*, by *H. de la More*; And re-printed at *London*, for *G. Horton*, [illegible]

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1914

A Declaration of the King of Scots, sent to the Queen of Sweden, and the rest of the Protestant Princes throughout Europe, &c.

SIR,

ON the 12 of this instant Decemb. there was a great Conference held at the Louvre, between the King of Scots, the Bishop of Kildare, and divers other of the Episcoparians, in relation to his late Engagement with the Presbyterians and subscribing of the Covenant: In order whereunto, it was desired at the Councel Table, that He would be pleased to demonstrate to the world some evident testimony of the foundation of his Religion, to which He reply'd, That it should be done by way

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of Declaration; and accordingly a Copy was forthwith drawn up, ratified, and subscribed; and, by Him, ordered to be published; a copy whereof, I have here sent you inclosed.

The DECLARATION.

WHereas some Jealousies have lately arose, that I am in a declining way from the Government of the Church by Bishops; I therefore must in Charity be thought desirous to preserve that Government in its right constitution, as a matter of Religion, wherein both my Judgment is fully satisfied, that it hath of all other the fullest Scripture-grounds and also the constant practice of all other Christian Churches; till, of late years, the tumultuarinesse of people, or the factiousnes and pride of Presbyters, gave occasion to some mens wits to invent new models, and propose them under specious titles of Christs Government, Scepter, and Kingdome, the better to serve their turns, to whom the change was beneficial. And whereas some men misconstrue my integrity, and say, That I am earnest and resolute to maintain it, not so much out of piety, as policy and reason of State: To this I answer, Wherein so far indeed reason of State doth induce me to approve

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that Government above any other, as I find it impossible for a Prince to preserve the State in quiet, unlesse he hath such an influence upon Churchmen; and they such a dependance on Him, as may best restrain the seditious exorbitancies of Ministers tongues; who with the keyes of Heaven have so far the keyes of the peoples hearts, as they prevail much by their Oratory, to let in, or shut out, both Peace and Loyalty.

But the folly of these men will at last punish it self, and the Desertors of Episcopacy will appear the greatest Enemies and betrayers of their own interest: for Presbytery is never so considerable, or effectual, as when it is joyned to, and crowned with Episcopacy. All Ministers will find as great a difference, in point of thriving, between the favour of the people, and of Princes, as plants do being watered by hand, or by the sweet and liberal dews of Heaven. A little moderation might have prevented greater mischiefs: I am firm to primitive Episcopacy, not to have it extirpated (if I can hinder it.) Discretion without passion might easily reform, whatever the rust of times, or indulgence of Laws, or corruption of manners have brought upon it. But there are many, who by popular heaps of weak and sophistical Teachers, seek to overlay and smother the pregnancie and authority of that power of Episcopall Government, which, beyond all equivocation and

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vulgar fallacy of names, is most convincingly set forth, both by Scripture, and all after-Histories of the Church. It cannot but seem passion, or some self-seeking, more then true zeal, and pious discretion, for any State or Church to prescribe such medicines onely for others, which themselves have used rather successfully then commendably; not considering that the same physick on different constitutions will have different operations: That may kill one, which doth but cure another.

But certainly, in matters of Religion those truths gain most on mens Judgments and consciences, which are least urged with secular violence, which weakens Truth with prejudices, and is unreasonable to be used; till such meanes of rational conviction have been applyed, as, leaving no excuse for ignorance, condemn mens obstinacie to deserved penalties. Which no charity will easily suspect of so many learned and pious Church-men in England; who, being alwayes bred up and conformable to the Government of Episcopacy, cannot so soon renounce both their former opinion and practice, onely because

cauſe the Scottiſh party (with the aſſiſtance of thdir brethren of England, uſed nothing more then the endeavouring to drive the Miniſters, as ſheep, into the common fold of Presbytery, or deſtroy them; at leaſt fleece them, by depriving them of the benefit of their flocks. What hinders that any Sects, Schiſms, or Hereſies, if they can get but number, ſtrength & opportunity, may not, according to this opinion and pattern, ſet up their ways by the like methods of violence? all which Presbytery ſeeks to ſuppreſs and render odious under thoſe names; when wiſe and learned men think, that nothing hath more marks of ſchiſm and ſectariſm, then this Presbyterian way; both as to the ancient, and ſtill moſt Universal way of the Church-government; and eſpecially as to the particular Laws and conſtitutions of the Engliſh Church. But we muſt leave the ſucceſs of all to God, who hath many waies to teach Us thoſe rules of true Reaſon, and

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peaceable Wisdom, which is from above, tending most to Gods glory, and his Churches good.

Given at Paris, *the* 14 *of* Decemb. 1651.

Sir, This Declaration being extant upon the return of the Post, I conceived it requisite, to send you a copy thereof; to the end, that you may be sensible of the apparent danger and ruines that would have ensu'd, if God had not fore-seen and prevented the inevitable calamities of his people, by breaking the bonds and covenant of Him, whose heart was fraught with deceit, and likewise scattering the Scottish Host, whose intentions tended to nothing more then the extirpation of liberty, and erecting of a classical slavery.

Paris Decem. 15. 1651.

FINIS.